

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A film frame handling station including:
 - a load port;
 - a cassette selectively loaded upon the load port whereby the cassette has a plurality of slots for selectively maintaining one or more film frames therein;
 - a robot end effector for selectively grabbing a selected film frame from within the cassette for processing, or selectively returning a film frame after processing back to the cassette; and
 - a frame support adapted to be vertically adjustable for alignment with a select slot in the cassette for film frame removal or insertion, the frame support including a plurality of horizontally adjustable contact elements.
2. The film frame handling station of claim 1, wherein the frame support includes a Y-shaped body.
3. The film frame handling station of claim 1, wherein the frame support includes a base arm and opposing support arms extending from the base arm.
4. The film frame handling station of claim 3, wherein each of the support arms includes at least one of the contact elements at a top thereof.
5. The film frame handling station of claim 4, wherein each of the support arms maintains a plurality of the contact elements.
6. The film frame handling station of claim 4, wherein the frame support is configured such that the contact elements are horizontally moveable relative to the base arm.

7. The film frame handling station of claim 6, further including at least one actuator for horizontally moving the contact elements relative to the base arm.
8. The film frame handling station of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of contact elements includes a roller.
9. The film frame handling station of claim 8, wherein each of the rollers is spring-loaded.
10. A method of handling a film frame maintaining a wafer relative to a cassette having a slot for selectively maintaining the film frame, the method comprising:
 - providing a handling system including a load port, a robot end effector, and a vertically adjustable frame support having a plurality of contact elements;
 - placing the cassette on to the load port;
 - engaging a forward edge of the film frame with the end effector;
 - supporting a bottom of the film frame along an outer region thereof with the contact elements; and
 - moving the film frame relative to a slot in the cassette via movement of the end effector and the frame support.
11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
 - determining a diameter of the film frame; and
 - horizontally positioning the contact elements based upon the determined diameter.
12. The method of claim 11, wherein horizontally positioning the contact elements includes programming an actuator connected to a support otherwise maintaining the contact elements.

13. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
determining a first diameter of a first film frame;
horizontally positioning the contact elements based upon the determined first diameter;
processing the first film frame;
determining a second diameter of a second film frame, the second diameter being different from the first diameter; and
horizontally re-positioning the contact elements based upon the determined second diameter.
 14. The method of claim 10, wherein moving the frame support relative to the cassette slot includes moving the film frame away from the cassette slot.
 15. The method of claim 10, wherein moving the frame support relative to the cassette slot includes moving the film frame toward the cassette slot.
-
16. The method of claim 10, wherein supporting a bottom of the film frame includes engaging the bottom of the film frame such that the film frame is moveable relative to the contact elements.
 17. The method of claim 16, wherein each of the contact elements is a roller.